

Policy Title:	THE MODIFIED ALLEN TEST		
Category:	1 - Provision of Care	Policy No.:	182
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Distribution:	Hospital-Wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If not Hospital-Wide, Other:	

PURPOSE:

To clearly outline the steps to follow when assessing collateral circulation, using the Modified Allen Test. This procedure may be performed by registered nurse, physician or respiratory therapist trained in this procedure.

DEFINITION(S):

The Modified Allen Test assesses collateral circulation of the hand when the radial artery is occluded.

POLICY:

The Modified Allen Test will be performed prior to radial artery puncture or cannulation.

PROCEDURE:
STEPS/KEY POINTS:

1. Wash Hands
2. Explain procedure and purpose to patient/family.
3. Select site for arterial puncture to be performed. (Preferred site is right or left radial)
4. Instruct patient to close hand tightly. If patient is unable to do this, raise the arm above heart level for several seconds.
 - **Drains blood from the extremity.**
5. Occlude patient's ulnar and radial arteries, with moderate finger pressure at the wrist, until blanching of the hand occurs.
 - **Obstructs blood flow to the hand.**
6. Ask the patient to open fist while the ulnar artery is released.
7. Examine the palm for color and refill time to determine ulnar artery patency.

- **Refill time should be ≤ 6 seconds. Prolonged pallor indicates insufficient ulnar blood flow (collateral circulation). Select an alternate site for cannulation. With a “negative” Allen’s Test, radial arterial puncture should not be done.**
8. Repeat procedure releasing radial artery as the fist is opened to assess blood flow in radial artery.

DOCUMENTATION:

1. Document in medical record:
 - Site and Result of the Allen’s Test.
 - Communication to other care team members of negative Allen’s Test.

ATTACHMENTS/FORMS:

None

REFERENCE(S)/AUTHORITY:

American Association of Critical Care Nurses, McHale Wiengand, D. (2013) AACN Procedure Manual for Critical Care (6th Ed.) Missouri: Elsevier.

Lynn-McHale Wiegand, D. and Carlson, K. (2005). AACN Procedure Manual for Critical Care (5th Ed.). Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co.

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